CLAIMS

1. In a mobile telecommunications system, a method of indicating the length of a data payload to be transported in a packet, the method comprising:

a. assessing (32, 34) the length of a data section to determine the appropriate units, from a plurality of possible units, in which the length should be expressed;

b. setting (36, 40) a granularity field to define said appropriate units in which the length of the data section is to be indicated in a data length indicator field; and

c. setting (38, 42) the length indicator field to indicate the data length.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the appropriate units are determined to be the largest units in which the length can precisely be expressed.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the units are bits and octets, and the granularity field is one bit in length to indicate length in bits or octets.

4. A method according claim 1, wherein the granularity field is located in the packet header adjacent the length indicator field.

5. A method according claim 1, wherein a packet is assessed (36) to determine whether it contains more than one payload unit, and each payload unit is assessed to determine said appropriate units.

6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the granularity field is set according to the units of the payload unit which is be expressed in the smallest units

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein the granularity field is set according to larger units of the possible units, if all the payload units can be expressed in such larger units.

8. In a mobile telecommunications system, apparatus for providing an indication of the length of a data payload to be transported in a packet, the apparatus comprising:

a. means (52) for assessing said length of data to determine appropriate units, from a plurality of possible units, in which the length should be expressed;

b. means (56) for setting a granularity field to define said appropriate units in which said length of data is to be indicated in a data length indicator field; and

c. means (58) for setting the length indicator field to indicate the data length.

9. Apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the assessing means is arranged to determine the appropriate units as the largest units in which the length can precisely be expressed.

10. Apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the assessing means is operative to determine whether a packet contains more than one payload unit, and for assessing each such payload unit to determine said appropriate units.

11. Apparatus according to claim 10, operative to select the appropriate units according to the units of the payload unit which is to be expressed in the smallest units

12. Apparatus according to claim 10, operative to select larger units of the possible units, if all the payload units can be expressed in such larger units.

13. In a mobile telecommunications system, an indicator of the length of data to be transported in a packet, wherein the packet comprises:

a granularity field (14) in the packet header (10) which defines the units in which the length of the data is to be indicated; and

a length indicator field (16) indicating the packet data length in the units defined by the granularity field.

14. A packet according to claim 13 wherein the granularity field is one bit in length to indicate length in bits or octets.

15. A packet according to claim 13, wherein the granularity field is located in the packet header adjacent the length indicator field.